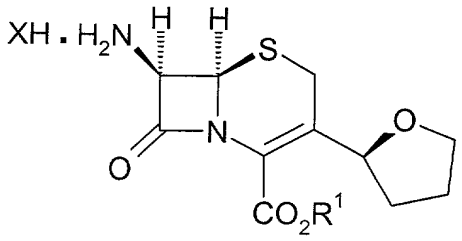
CLAIMS:

1. A process for preparing a compound of formula **(I)**:

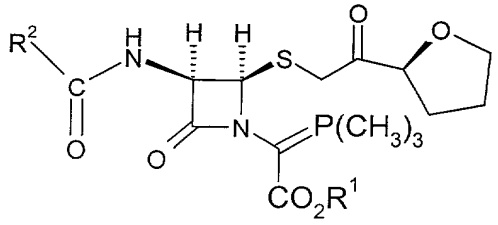


(I)

wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl; and X is halo;

comprising the steps of:

a) cyclizing a trimethylphosphinic compound of formula **(IIIa)**



(IIIa)

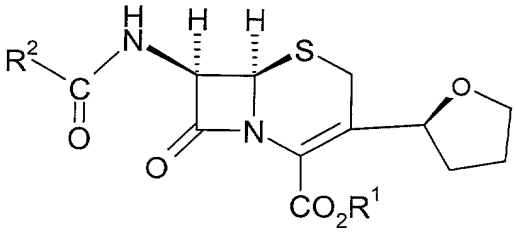
wherein

R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl;

in a solvent;

to form a compound of formula **(II)**



(II)

wherein

R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl;

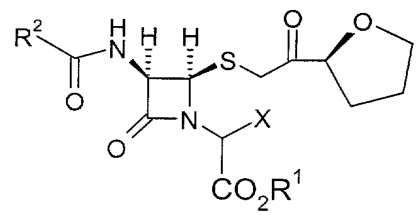
R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl; and

b) reacting said compound of formula **(II)** with an acid.

2. A process according to claim 1, wherein said solvent is selected from the group consisting of toluene, xylene, tetrahydrofuran, methylene chloride and acetonitrile.

3. A process according to claim 1, wherein said acid is phosphorus pentachloride or phosphorus pentabromide; and wherein X is chloro or bromo.

4. A process according to claim 1, further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(IIIa)**, by reacting a compound of formula **(IIIb)**



(IIIb)

wherein said R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl,

said R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl; and

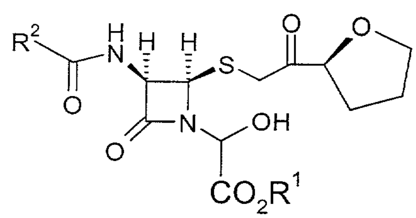
said X is halo;

with trimethylphosphine, in a solvent and in the presence of a base.

5. A process according to claim 4, wherein said solvent is tetrahydrofuran, acetonitrile or methylene chloride.

6. A process according to claim 4, wherein said base is selected from the group consisting of imidazole, 2,6-lutidine, pyridine, N-methylmorpholine and sodium bicarbonate.

7. A process according to claim 4, further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(IIIb)**, by reacting a compound of formula **(IIIc)**



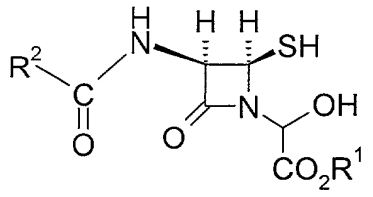
(IIIc)

wherein said R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl and said R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl; with a halogenating agent, in a solvent and in the presence of a base.

8. A process according to claim 7, wherein said halogenating agent is thionyl chloride, thionyl bromide, phosphorus trichloride or phosphorus tribromide; and said halo is chloro or bromo.

9. A process according to claim 7, wherein said base is selected from the group consisting of pyridine, 2,6-lutidine, N-methylmorpholine and imidazole.

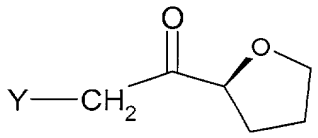
10. A process according to claim 7, further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(IIIc)**, by reacting a compound of formula **(V)**



(V)

wherein said R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl and said R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl;

with a compound of formula **(IV)**



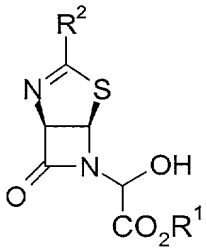
(IV)

wherein Y is a leaving group selected from the group consisting of bromo, chloro, fluoro, iodo and tosylate; in a solvent.

11. A process according to claim 10, wherein said Y is bromo or chloro.

12. A process according to claim 10 wherein said solvent is alcohol selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol and propanol; methylene chloride; acetone; dimethylformamide or mixtures thereof.

13. A process according to claim 10, further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(V)** by reacting a compound of formula **(VIa)**



(VIa)

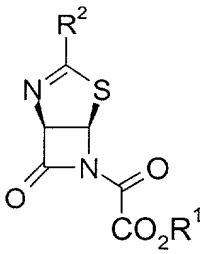
wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl and wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl; with an acid in a solvent.

14. A process according to claim 13 wherein said acid is *para*-toluene sulfonic acid or methane sulfonic acid.

15. A process according to claim 13 wherein said solvent is methylene chloride, tetrahydrofuran, acetone or mixtures thereof.

16. A process according to claim 13 further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(VIa)** by:

reacting a compound of formula **(VIb)**



(VIb)

wherein

R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl;

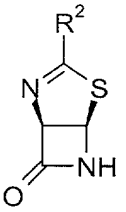
R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl;

with a reducing agent selected from the group consisting of sodium borohydride, sodium cyanoborohydride, borane and sodium triacetoxy borohydride; in a solvent.

17. A process according to claim 16 wherein said reducing agent is sodium triacetoxy borohydride.

18. A process according to claim 16 wherein said solvent is acetic acid, methylene chloride, tetrahydrofuran, isopropanol or mixtures thereof.

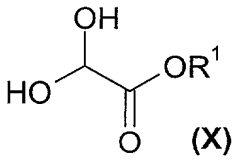
19. A process according to claim 13 further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(VIa)** by reacting a compound of formula **(XI)**



(XI)

wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl;

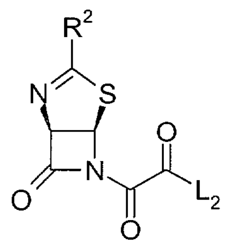
with a compound of formula **(X)**



(X)

wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl; in a solvent; in the presence of a base.

20. A process according to claim 16 further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(VIb)** comprising reacting a compound of formula **(VIII)**



(VIII)

wherein

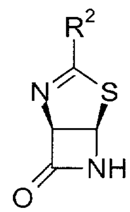
R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl;

L_2 is a leaving group selected from the group consisting of halo, azide and C_{1-6}alkoxy; with a compound of formula **(VII)**

$$R^1\text{—OH} \qquad \textbf{(VII)}$$

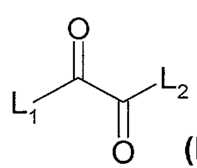
wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl, in a solvent, in the presence of a base;

further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(VIII)** by reacting a compound of formula **(XI)**



(XI)

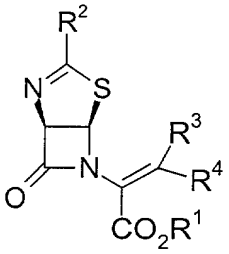
wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl C_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl; with a compound of formula **(IX)**



(IX)

wherein each of said L_1 and L_2 is a leaving group selected from the group consisting of halo, azide and C_{1-6}alkoxy; in a solvent, optionally in the presence of a base.

21. A process according to claim 16 further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(VIb)** comprising reacting a compound of formula **(VIc)**



(VIc)

wherein

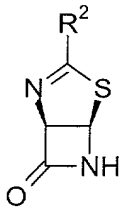
R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}arylC_{1-6}alkyl and dithianyl;

R^3 is hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl; and

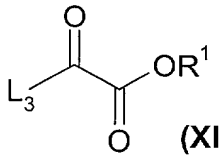
R^4 is hydrogen or C_{1-6}alkyl; with ozone, in a solvent.

22. A process according to claim 16 further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula **(VIb)** comprising reacting a compound of formula **(XI)**



(XI)

wherein R^2 is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6}alkyl, C_{6-10}aryl, C_{6-10}aryl C_{1-6}alkyl, and dithianyl; with a compound of formula **(XII)**



(XII)

wherein

said L_3 is halo;

R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl;

in a solvent, in the presence of a base.

23. A process according to claim 20, wherein each of L_1 and L_2, wherever each of them occurs, is halo selected from the group consisting of bromo or chloro.

24. A process according to claim 21 wherein R^3 is methyl and R^4 is methyl.

25. A process according to claim 7 wherein said solvent, wherever it occurs, is methylene chloride, tetrahydrofuran or mixtures thereof.

26. A process according to claim 21 wherein said solvent is methylene chloride, tetrahydrofuran, isopropanol or mixtures thereof.

27. A process according to claim 19 wherein said base is selected from the group consisting of diisopropylamine, triethylamine, pyridine and 2,6-lutidine.

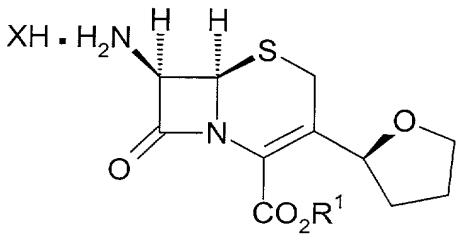
28. A process according to claim 1, wherein each of said R^1, wherever it occurs, is *para*-nitrobenzyl.

29. A process according to claim 1, wherein each of said R^1, wherever it occurs, is allyl.

30. A process according to claim 1, wherein each of said R^2, wherever it occurs, is $C_{6\text{-}10}$aryl$C_{1\text{-}6}$alkyl.

31. A process according to claim 1, wherein each of said R^2, wherever it occurs, is benzyl.

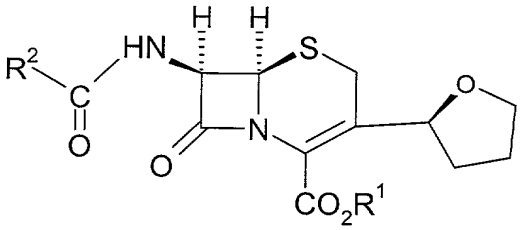
32. A compound of formula **(I)**



(I)

wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl; and X is halo.

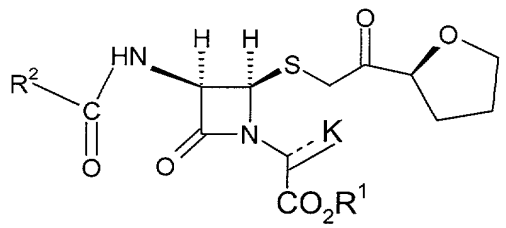
33. A compound of formula **(II)**



(II)

wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl; and R^2 is $(C_6\text{-}C_{10})$aryl$(C_{1\text{-}6})$alkyl.

34. A compound of formula **(III)**



(III)

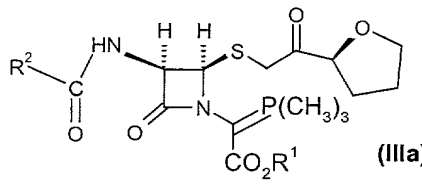
wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl;

R^2 is $(C_6\text{-}C_{10})$aryl$(C_{1\text{-}6})$alkyl;

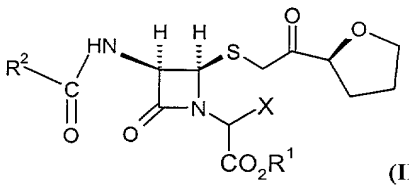
K is hydroxy, halo or -P-$(CH_3)_3$;

wherein the C-K bond is a single bond when K is hydroxy or halo; and a double bond when K is -P-$(CH_3)_3$; and

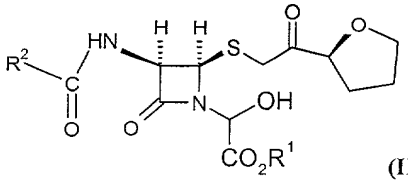
wherein said compound of formula **(III)** is selected from the group consisting of compound of formulae **(IIIa)**, **(IIIb)** and **(IIIc)**:



(IIIa) ;

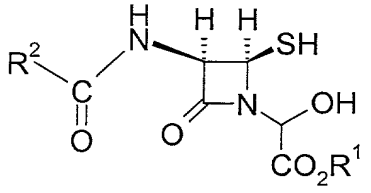


(IIIb) and



(IIIc) .

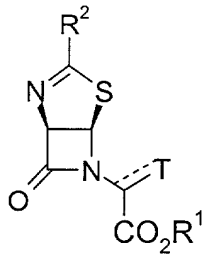
35. A compound of formula **(V)**



(V)

wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl; and R^2 is $(C_6\text{-}C_{10})$aryl$(C_{1\text{-}6})$alkyl.

36. A compound of formula **(VI)**



(VI)

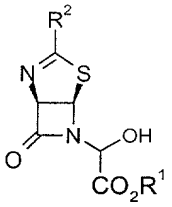
wherein R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl or allyl;

R^2 is $(C_6\text{-}C_{10})$aryl$(C_{1\text{-}6})$alkyl;

T is hydroxy or >O;

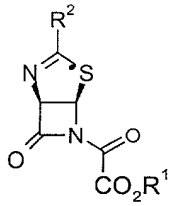
wherein the C-T bond is a single bond when T is hydroxy; and a double bond when T is >O ; and

wherein said compound of formula **(VI)** is selected from the group consisting of compound of formulae **(VIa)** and **(VIb)**:



(VIa)

and



(VIb)

37. A compound according to claim 32, wherein said R^1 is *para*-nitrobenzyl.

38. A compound according to claim 32, wherein said R^1 is allyl.

39. A compound according to claim 32, wherein said R^2 is benzyl.